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## Understanding the value of art therapy

Melissa Walker, a nationally registered art therapist with experience in the use of the creative arts with military service members and their dependents, writes at Americans for the Arts ARTSblog:

"A fit, uniformed Marine sat before me, focusing intently on the task at hand. He had been working on creating a mask now for almost two hours. He had never in his life engaged in anything like this before.

"This Marine had recently arrived anxious, confused and angry. After 23 years of service to his country, he felt broken and hopeless. Multiple blast injuries had upset his cognitive abilities and caused daily headaches. Traumatic memories were constantly clouding his thoughts. He worried for the safety of his family. He was overwhelmed.

"Suddenly, the Marine looked up at me. 'I'm finished,' he declared. He stared at the mask, which was covered in symbolism only he could understand. I wouldn't even begin to try and interpret his intentions, but I wouldn't have to. He hesitated, then began pointing out each area of the mask and explaining its significance.

"Afterwards, the Marine stared at me, shocked. 'I can't believe I just told you all of that. I've never been able to explain what was bothering me before. And now here it is ... all in one place.'"

— Posted by Melissa Walker, May 13 at blog.artsusa.org

# Arts community losses (from page 1)

Horse Capture was among the first Native American curators in the country when he became curator of the Plains Indian Museum in Cody, WY, in 1979. In 1994, he was hired as deputy assistant director for cultural resources at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), and later served as senior counselor to the director. During his 10 years at NMAI, he was instrumental in organizing and presenting the new museum on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

Herman Viola, now curator emeritus for NMAI, told the *Great Falls Tribune*, "He helped interpret everything. He helped in the design of the building, he helped set up the exhibits, he was truly significant."

Horse Capture retired in 2004 and returned to Montana, but continued to work for Indian people.

His many honors include: an honorary doctorate of letters from Montana State University and a Humanities Award from Humanities Montana. He was also a presidential appointee to the National Museum Services Board, and a member of the Montana Committee for the Humanities (now Humanities Montana).

His life-long work was creating the Tribal Archive Project, a database that includes information from worldwide museum sources about the A'aninin (Gros Ventre). He completed it before he died, and made it available to his people and various institutions of higher learning across the United States.

A keeper of tradition and knowledge in the Horse Capture family, he firmly believed in empowering Indian people.

"George had a remarkable life filled with service to his people and to our country ... his life and his commitment to his people and his community is a reminder of the power of each individual to make a difference," said U.S. Sen. John Tester, a member of the U.S. Committee on Indian Affairs, on the floor the Senate the day after Horse Capture's death.

## Chas Cantlon: A visionary

Chas Cantlon, who, with his wife, Margie, organized the largest rural performing arts series in Montana, died May 29 at his home in Worley, ID. He was 67.

According to Arni Fishbaugh, executive director of the Montana Arts Council, "Chas was a remarkable man in so many ways in Montana's arts world."

Cantlon was born in Indianapolis and migrated to western Montana 40 years ago. He served for many years as director of the Folkshop, an organization that served developmentally disabled people in the Mission

Valley, and was the director of the Lake County Youth Home for almost 38 years, prior to his retirement last fall.

Although he and Margie had moved to north Idaho, they continued to organize the Big Productions concert series in Ronan and Polson.

"His leadership of Big Productions, to help support the group home there, was unique, unusual and visionary," says Fishbaugh.

"It's one thing to book a season of events, but another

to garner community support to make it a success. We were always so impressed by the audience they drew, which frequently numbered between 200 and 300 – most impressive for such small towns!"

The series got its start in 1987, after a board member of what was then the Folkshop suggested offering concerts to raise funds for the organization. "We wanted to be able to give people something back for their money," recalled

Cantlon in an interview last fall.

For the first concert, he recruited Rob Quist, a former member of the Mission Mountain Wood Band and the Montana Band, and his new band, Great Northern. "It was the talk of the town for two weeks," said Cantlon.

The next two shows lost enough money that by the end of the inaugural season, "we were \$35 ahead. I thought it was a great accomplishment not to be in the hole."

Organizers decided to recruit sponsors – a plan that helped ensure the series' long life. "The reason we've lasted 25 years is because we've had sponsors and believe we need to give them more than a passing name in the program," said Cantlon. "We need to make it clear to the community what they are doing for us, and for the audience."

Chas, Margie and their advisory council sought to give Mission Valley audiences a mix

of sure-fire draws and more challenging fare, and provided up to a dozen school performances each year as part of the package.

"Chas was an innovative thinker and he was not afraid to try new strategies, which only made his work in the presenting field more valuable," says Fishbaugh.

He participated in and chaired the Montana Performing Arts Consortium, which hosts an annual artist showcase and block-booking conference for Montana arts presenters. Fishbaugh recalls that as a conference participant, "he consistently coerced, tugged, cajoled and led people on paths that made all presenters in our state stronger, more vibrant and of greater value to their community."

The series continued as a benefit for the Lake County Youth Home, a facility for kids who are estranged from their families, and Chas and Margie encouraged artists to interact with the residents. The concert series "changed the culture of the Youth Home," said Cantlon. "It blends with our mission

beautifully."

Over the years, the concerts helped youngsters throughout the Mission Valley become more respectful audiences and gain an appreciation for different kinds of music.

The same might be true of Mission Valley audiences, who developed a reputation for being appreciative and responsive. "They know how to give

performers energy," said Cantlon.

Clearly, it was a labor of love for Cantlon, who spent a quarter century bringing performers and audiences together. "People are remembered for their spirit, among other things," says Fishbaugh. "To many, Chas's spirit brought a smile to the face, a new way of thinking, an important life lesson and, without a doubt, the sense that life is best lived fully."

"There's a big chasm where Chas once stood, but his spirit fills everyone who knew him, and for that we are so lucky."

According to Margie, the Big Productions season will continue this year with a "Tribute to Chas" series. After that, she said, the torch for future seasons will be passed onward.

On open house to celebrate Chas's life will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 24, at the Ronan Community Center.



George Horse Capture



Chas and Margie Cantlon, toasting the 25th anniversary of their performing arts series last fall.

# New art school opens in downtown Kalispell

Nicholas Oberling and Jennifer Li opened their new art school, the Glacier Art Academy, in early May in downtown Kalispell. The academy offers art classes for both adults and children.

The two professional artists have become well known in the Montana art world since they moved to Kalispell in 1998. Their experience includes a combined 21 years of professional studio art training in the academic ateliers of the famous Art Students League of New York.

Oberling, a landscape painter, is a founding member of the Montana Painters Alliance. He was a recipient of the Montana Arts Council's Visual Arts Fellowship in 2000, and has over 20 years of experience as an art educator. He's a past president and served on the board of trustees of the Hockaday Museum of Art for 11 years. His work may be viewed at [www.nicholasoberling.com](http://www.nicholasoberling.com).



Jennifer Li

Li studied painting for 11 years at the Art Students League under distinguished realist painters Harvey Dinnerstein and Frank Mason. She has been painting professionally since 1990. Her work can be seen at [www.jenniferli.info](http://www.jenniferli.info).

The Glacier Art Academy will provide classically oriented art instruction of a caliber seldom offered outside of large urban areas. Classes for adults and teens will include beginning-to-advanced Painting in Oils, Figure and Portrait Painting, Landscape Painting, Plein Air Painting, and Drawing from Life.

Subjects will include drawing and painting technique and materials, composition and dynamic symmetry, perspective and artistic anatomy, understanding value gradations and color.

Classes for children will be fun and instructive; all children's art supplies will be provided, and there will be a discount for siblings.

Workshops will also be offered for professional artists and art teachers.

Classes at the Glacier Art Academy are ongoing – one can sign up at any time and the remaining session will be prorated.

The academy is located at 29 Third Street E., in the southwest corner of downtown Kalispell's historic KM Building. The large, loft-like space has high ceilings, natural light, and an enclosed outdoor patio. Many people may recognize it as the former Bulldog Saloon, now transformed with vintage plaster casts, floral still lifes, and a human skeleton.

For more information, call 406-257-3801 or visit [www.glacierartacademy.com](http://www.glacierartacademy.com).



Nicholas Oberling  
(Photo by Brian Eklund/Hockaday Museum of Art)